IN THE CLAIMS:

Please rewrite claim 12 as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in the application:

Claims 1-11 (cancelled).

12. (Currently amended) A method for detecting the presence in a sample, contained in a sterile receptacle, of at least one ~~anaerobic~~ microorganism, the sample being in contact with a culture medium, comprising:

- reducing a detection time of said microorganism by adding into the receptacle at least one sterile, inert, solid support,
- incubating at a suitable temperature, and
- monitoring the variation in at least one characteristic related to the presence of the microorganism(s) to be detected in said receptacle.

13. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said solid support is added to said receptacle in such a quantity as to obtain a layer of material having a surface area approximately equivalent to that of an interface between the sample and a gaseous atmosphere in the receptacle.

14. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said characteristic comprises a variation in at least one chemical indicator added into the receptacle before incubation and/or a variation in at least one physicochemical or electrical parameter.

15. (Previously added) The method of claim 14, wherein said chemical indicator comprises a colored or fluorescent indicator.

16. (Previously added) The method of claim 14, wherein said physicochemical or electrical parameter is at least one member selected from the group consisting of CO_2 production, pressure, turbidity, oxidation/ reduction potential and pH.

17. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said sample is a biological sample selected from the group consisting of blood, cerebrospinal fluid, pleural fluid and urine, or said sample is a non-biological sample selected from the group consisting of water, food products, and pharmaceutical products.

18. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said receptacle has transparent walls, and said variation is observed optically through all or part of at least one of said walls.

19. (Previously added) The method of claim 16, wherein change in said physicochemical or electrical parameter is detected by at least one physicochemical or electrical sensor.

20. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said sterile, inert, solid support is made of a natural material.

21. (Previously added) The method of claim 20, wherein said natural material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of silica beads, glass beads, quartz particles, grains of sand, vermiculite, zeolite, feldspar particles, glass wool, rock wool, clay beads, and cork fragments.

22. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein said sterile, inert, solid support is made of an artificial material.

23. (Previously added) The method of claim 22, wherein said artificial material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of polystyrene beads, polyethylene beads, polypropylene beads, clusters of small polyethylene beads, with variable pore size and dimensions, growth supports in the form of small beads used in tissue culture, latex beads, gelatin-coated beads, and resin beads.

24. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein the sterile, inert, solid support comprises an element of any shape made of polyethylene.

25. (Previously added) The method of claim 12, wherein the support consists of beads or particles having a diameter of between 1 μm and 10 mm.

26. (Previously added) The method of claim 25, wherein said diameter is between 0.1 mm and 5 mm.

27. (Previously added) The method of claim 20, wherein said sterile, inert solid support is placed in a location in said receptacle such that the support will come into contact with a culture medium contained within said receptacle.